

business, and teach his future children to love Israel as much as he did. He had his whole life ahead of him, and today we mourn the life he lost.

His commitment to the greater good, his unwavering bravery, and his altruism were a guiding light for all who knew him. And although we can never repay Omer or his family for his courageous efforts, may his memory be a blessing.

We must honor Omer Balva for his service and strength to fight back against terrorism as we hope for peace in Israel and beyond. May his memory be a blessing.

HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF COOKEVILLE

HON. JOHN W. ROSE

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate First Baptist Church of Cookeville on 150 years of spreading the gospel throughout Middle Tennessee. I was raised at First Baptist Church. I came to know my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, was baptized, and was a member for many years at First Baptist. My wife Chelsea and I were married in this church so, needless to say, I received many blessings from this congregation.

The church was organized in 1873 as the Cookeville Baptist Church of Christ. The church's first Pastor, Patrick Moore, led a congregation of 34 members. Together, they agreed to a church covenant, which reads in part, "the purpose of this body is to advance the church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort promoting prosperity and spirituality." They continue to fulfill that commitment 150 years later.

Today, the church enjoys a membership of more than 1,300 members and an average attendance of more than 450. But their story isn't one of instant success. It's one of persistence and faith.

There were long periods of time when the church stopped meeting for worship. In fact, with 20 members at the time, the church underwent a reorganization in 1892. And it wasn't until 21 years after the church's founding that the congregation was able to secure their own House of Worship.

Like so many churches, First Baptist Church of Cookeville was impacted by the Great Depression in the 1930s, which led to the church opting to discontinue their pastor's salary through the end of the year. But that decade was about more than loss for the church. It was also in the 1930s that the Women's Missionary Union was formed, along with the Young Women's Auxiliary and Girl's Auxiliary for the women and girls of the church. The church also formed groups for the boys and men of the church, including the Royal Ambassadors and Baptist Brotherhood.

This is a common theme of this church's story. Through difficult times, they stood firm in their faith and found ways to continue being a blessing to others. First Baptist Church of Cookeville started several missions over the years, missions that later became standalone congregations.

The church began reaching out to students at the nearby Tennessee Polytechnic Institute,

now known as Tennessee Tech University, as early as 1926. They even built a Baptist Student Center, which continues to be a resource for young people to this day.

First Baptist Church of Cookeville was also a pioneer in broadcasting sermons on tv, which they began doing in 1973. The church continues to broadcast their services today, bringing the Word of God to homes throughout the Upper Cumberland.

Whether it be serving their local community through missions like Operation Christmas Child or the Family Life Center, or a mission overseas, the folks making up the church embody what it means to have a servant's heart.

Again, I want to congratulate First Baptist Church of Cookeville on continuing to fulfill that covenant written all those years ago. I wish Pastor Scott McKinney the best of luck as he continues to guide the church in the years ahead. I pray they will continue to be a blessing to their community, and to the region, for another 150 years.

RECOGNIZING THE HEROIC SERVICE OF KADRI CAKRANI DURING THE HOLOCAUST

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to recognize the humanitarian efforts of Albanian Commandant General Kadri Cakrani.

On Saturday, November 11, 2023, the Albanian and Southeastern European Studies Program at DePaul University will host an event entitled, The Cakrani Family of Albania: Repairing the Fabric of History, that will honor the work of General Cakrani in protecting Jews during the Holocaust and advancing Democracy in Albania. Illinois is the home of many relatives of General Cakrani, including my constituents Elizabeth Cakrani Vrato, Evan Metaj, and Abigail Vrato—his granddaughter, great-great grandson, and great-great granddaughter, respectively.

During the German occupation of Albania, Commandant-General Cakrani led the protection of over 600 Jewish refugees and residents in the Berat region from Nazi capture during the Holocaust. At risk of death, General Cakrani lied to Nazi officials about the whereabouts of Jews hiding in Albania and guided efforts to shelter Jews in safe hiding locations, including his own home. His courage and leadership contributed to Albania being the only European country that ended World War II with more Jewish residents than at the start of the war. Further, General Cakrani sheltered three American Army nurses and secretly returned them to Allies after their plane crashed in Albania.

In 1951, General Cakrani moved to the United States after President Harry Truman granted him political asylum. He worked with the U.S. Intelligence to try to bring Democracy to Albania for the remainder of his life. The lives and safety of families and individuals depended on General Cakrani's silence about his efforts during his lifetime. The DePaul event is a step to recognize his humanitarian work during and after the war.

The Auschwitz Memorial Museum, the United States Holocaust Museum, the Illinois

Holocaust Museum, the Jerusalem Post, and the Israel Hayom have all recognized General Cakrani's service and bravery. Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker recently issued an executive proclamation recognizing November 11, 2023, as Kadri Cakrani Day in Illinois.

I wish to add my voice to those recognizing the service and bravery of Commandant-General Kadri Cakrani in the protection of Jews during the Holocaust and his work to promote Democracy in Albania. I wish his family well as they honor his work this week at the DePaul event on Kadri Cakrani Day in Illinois.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call No. 570 and No. 571, I inadvertently voted Aye. I oppose the Perry Amendments, and both votes should be recorded as Nay.

COMMEMORATING THE 2023 RANGERS WORLD SERIES

HON. COLIN Z. ALLRED

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. ALLRED. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to commemorate a historic achievement by the Texas Rangers.

The Texas Rangers won the World Series for the first time in franchise history despite many setbacks and injuries along the way.

On Friday, November 3, 2023, Arlington, TX hosted a well-deserved Championship Parade.

As a Congressman for North Texas and a lifelong Rangers fan, I am excited to celebrate this hard-fought victory with the Rangers and my fellow fans.

Achievements such as this don't happen overnight, and they take the support of families, friends, coaches, fans, staff and crew. It really does take a community. And the Metroplex should be proud.

As a former professional athlete myself, I know the hard work it takes, day in and day out, to practice and work to win as a team. All while forging ahead in the face of adversity.

They have shown that North Texans are champions, and we couldn't be prouder of what they all have accomplished together.

Go Rangers.

GRAND OPENING OF EMERGENCE HEALTH NETWORK VETERANS ONE STOP CENTER IN EAST EL PASO

HON. VERONICA ESCOBAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the Emergence Health Network Veterans One Stop Center for their continuous innovation to expand mental and behavioral health services to El Paso veterans and active-duty military and their families.

Emergence Health Network (EHN), the local mental health authority in El Paso, has a dedicated facility focusing on behavioral needs and services. The Veterans One Stop Center (VOSC) in Northeast El Paso provides behavioral health services and additional support to veterans, active-duty military, and their families. Recovery-oriented care is offered to meet the needs of veterans, thus promoting hope and encouragement.

EHN's partnership with Fort Bliss has proved to be a tremendous benefit as an additional resource and support system for these individuals to solve the wait and intervention times for care. EHN's Veteran's One Stop Center has the capability and resources to expedite these services to a much-needed population and can provide care to service members anywhere from two to five days of initial contact.

Today, it is my privilege to honor Emergence Health Network's Veterans One Stop Center for the grand opening of their new facility in East El Paso and thank them for their ongoing efforts to help our veterans, active-duty military, and their families.

RECOGNIZING FRANK ROMANO

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an individual whose unwavering dedication to providing exceptional care to the most vulnerable in our society, Frank Romano.

For over four decades, Frank Romano has been creating and nurturing several successful enterprises that provide essential services to elderly and disabled individuals. His notable portfolio includes skilled nursing, assisted living residencies, adult day health programs, as well as home care services and senior transportation.

A graduate of Merrimack College and the Harvard Business School Program in Entrepreneurship, Frank embarked on his entrepreneurial journey at IBM in Boston where he worked for six years, interspersed with a two-year leave of absence to honorably serve our nation in the Vietnam War. Upon his return, he channeled his passion and expertise into establishing his first healthcare facility in 1972, laying the foundation for what has been a long career synonymous with dignity, care, and deep-rooted respect for the care of our elders.

Frank has served on the Board of Governor's for the American Health Care Association, the largest association in the United States representing long term and post-acute care providers. His contributions have not gone unnoticed, as he was honored with the Joe Warner Patient Advocacy Award, acknowledging his unparalleled commitment to senior care.

On Thursday, November 16th the Massachusetts Senior Care Foundation will honor Frank at its annual breakfast. Today, Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the many years of service Frank has dedicated to his profession, which will undoubtedly continue to inspire and uplift our community for generations to come.

RECOGNIZING WWII U.S. ARMY
VETERAN SERGEANT JOSEPH
DRAKE

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the bravery and valor of U.S. Army Veteran Sergeant Joseph Drake, recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal and one of only 12 remaining WWII Army Rangers. Born on October 24, 1924, Sgt. Drake recently celebrated his 99th birthday with family and friends at his home in Hawley, PA, where he currently resides.

As the member of the U.S. House representing Hawley, in Wayne County, I am grateful to have this opportunity to recognize the courage, dedication and selfless service that Sgt. Drake offered in support of our Nation during WWII in April of 1943 at just 19 years old.

Sgt. Drake honorably served with Company A of the U.S. Army Ranger Battalion and after training in Mississippi, Louisiana and England he fought in five battles in the European Theater, including the Battle of the Bulge and Central Europe. His outfit spearheaded the invasion of Europe by climbing the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc on D-Day on June 6, 1944.

Sgt. Drake proudly recalls Company A moving to relieve a Battalion from the PA National Guard's 28th Infantry Division in Ardennes, France, during the initial German attack that led to the Battle of the Bulge. Sgt. Drake and his Company fought through Luxenberg, Belgium, Germany and Czechoslovakia until the end of WWII in 1945.

Sgt. Drake's distinguished service has earned him many medals, including this institution's highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions—the Congressional Gold Medal.

Upon returning to the United States in October of 1945, Sgt. Drake was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army in December and started a family with his late wife, the former Lydora LaTourmous, in Hawley. They were married on September 23, 1950, and raised two daughters and one son. Life gifted them with many grand and great-grandchildren.

Shortly after arriving back home, Sgt. Drake joined the U.S. Postal Service and worked there for 34 years, 15 of which he was the Hawley postmaster. He's proud to be the first person from Hawley, and without a political appointment, to have served in this position.

Sgt. Drake was active in his community, serving as Quartermaster and Treasurer with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 5823 in Hawley, founded by his late brother Robert J. Drake. He worked with the Mayor of Hawley and others to plan parades and carnivals. After the post disbanded in 2008, he made arrangements to have the post headquarters on Park Place turned over to the County of Wayne, for the Hawley Senior Center.

Sgt. Drake's devotion to our Nation is evident in his exemplary military career, and I thank him for his service while wearing, and after hanging up his uniform. He truly embodies what it means to be one of the few remaining members of the "Greatest Generation."

Sgt. Drake is a true American hero whose commitment to duty and service distinguishes him as an individual whose character represents the very best of Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District, and I am proud to be his Representative in Washington.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ANTHONY D'ESPOSITO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Mr. Speaker, due to unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to participate in voting on H.R. 1607 and H.R. 359. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 599, and YEA on Roll Call No. 600.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF KELLIE RUETSCH

HON. MIKE CAREY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. CAREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Kellie Ruetsch, a constituent from Plain City, Ohio.

Kellie is a regional operations manager for Superior Air-Ground Ambulance Service of Ohio Inc. She was recently recognized as one of Superior Ambulance's "Stars of Life." Every year, Superior Ambulance recognizes a handful of its EMTs for their exceptional leadership skills. An EMT since 1997, Kellie has devoted her life to helping others.

Apart from being an EMT, Kellie is also a paramedic and a firefighter. Despite volunteering countless hours to her community and raising two children, Kellie has also found time to advance her skills and professional growth.

In 2016, Kellie was offered a leadership position in which she immediately excelled. In 2017, Kellie obtained her EMS instructor license and completed Ambulance Service Manager training in 2022. Kellie's colleagues and superiors say, that she's someone who leads by example, never seeing a task as below her station.

Plain City and central Ohio are better places to live because of people like Kellie Ruetsch. I salute her service to our community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT GARCIA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I was unfortunately unable to be present at votes on November 6 due to travel reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 599, and YEA on Roll Call No. 600.